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LETTER

TO A FRIEND IN LANCASHIRE.

*On the Spy-System mixed with the Dragooning System.—On Capt. Raynes's confessions relative to the bribery and perjury employed by Generals Maitland and Acland.—On the state of the paper-money.—On the predictions of Mr. PAINE and myself.*

North Hampstead, Long Island,  
October 26, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR,

It was my intention to have exposed, in this Number, the intrigue for palming Mr. ROGER O'CONNOR on the City of Westminster; but, the receipt of your letter of the 16th Sept. has made me defer, till my next, the performance of that duty. In the mean while, however, let me observe, that I mean not to say any thing injurious to the character of Mr. O'CONNOR, and that no man living could have felt greater joy than I did at hearing of his escape from the dealers in human blood. I am, you will understand me, quite satisfied, that his blood was bargained for! and that he has to thank the jury for saving his body from a gallows. But, for reasons which I shall give, I am convinced, that nothing short of a very vile

intrigue can have given rise to the idea of an intention to propose Mr. O'CONNOR for Westminster.

Your Letter is full of topics of such great importance, that it calls me off from the above subject. I, at first, thought of referring merely to the Letter; but, on a second reading, it appears to me, that I ought to insert the whole of it here, and to subjoin such remarks as it may suggest to my mind; for, I really think it would be injustice to the County, to which you belong, to keep from the public eye such a specimen, not only of good writing, but of large views, and of opinions ably and clearly stated. Here, therefore, I insert the whole of your letter:

“DEAR SIR,

“I cannot flatter myself with your remembrance, having had the pleasure of being in your company but a very short time at Liverpool. But a desire to contribute something towards a removal of those disadvantages which your great distance from our country necessarily imposes, impels me to take up the pen, in the hope that I may suggest some communication not altogether unworthy your attention.

“Before you receive this, you will have become fully acquainted with a most striking feature in our domestic history: I mean the fabrica-

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"tion of treasonable plots by hire-  
 "lings of the Government, for the  
 "purposes of alarming '*the Loyal*',  
 "of justifying the misrepresentations  
 "which Corruption has been driven  
 "to, as to the views of the Reformers;  
 "and in support of those despotic  
 "measures, to which the ponderous  
 "system of fraud and extravagance  
 "has had recourse for the prolonga-  
 "tion of its existence. The details of  
 "these practices will have reached  
 "you sometime ago. Their exposure  
 "will have afforded you a rich repast,  
 "and wants only the finishing touches  
 "from your pen to exhibit them in  
 "merited deformity. It will not be  
 "in my power to add any thing to the  
 "accounts you will already have re-  
 "ceived of these transactions, but my  
 "observations *on the effects* they seem  
 "to have produced, may not be alto-  
 "gether useless.

"Detected as the Government (by  
 "which term you will always under-  
 "stand me to mean the whole mass  
 "of power described by you) detect-  
 "ed as it was in its diabolical con-  
 "trivances and base alliances with  
 "the most detestable of mankind;  
 "every instance of riot or of plotting  
 "being clearly traced home to some  
 "branch of the immaculate System,  
 "you will not wonder if the insolence  
 "of the Ministers received a little  
 "check. Such indeed was the case;  
 "and this complete turning of the  
 "tables on their adversaries, exalted  
 "the ~~late~~ <sup>Tone</sup> of the friends of Reform,  
 "both in their writing and conversa-  
 "tion (for of speeches we scarcely  
 "have any) to such a degree as to  
 "have rendered most of the gagging  
 "Bills a dead letter. To this result,

"however, the manly pleading of  
 "Mr. WOOLER, contributed more,  
 "perhaps, than any other individual  
 "occurrence, and Mr. WOOLER's  
 "brave and laudable conduct, assist-  
 "ed by his worthy solicitor, appears  
 "to have broken down one of the  
 "strong holds of Corruption, and  
 "opened a new road for the cham-  
 "pions of freedom, on which I be-  
 "lieve they have ever since kept  
 "their eyes fixed with much confi-  
 "dence. But it is not the confusion  
 "of ministers and their adherents,  
 "and the assurance of our friends  
 "alone, that have arisen from the  
 "disclosures in question; another  
 "good, and a great good, too, can-  
 "not fail to proceed therefrom: the  
 "trick of *sham plots* cannot again  
 "be played off upon us; nor is it  
 "conceivable that any of the sin-  
 "cere but mistaken friends of free-  
 "dom will, during the present ge-  
 "neration, be tempted into any real  
 "schemes of the kind. Every fear  
 "on this head may, I think, hence-  
 "forth be discharged from our  
 "minds.

"Thus circumstanced, the System  
 "under which we have enjoyed so  
 "many blessings, will be left in the  
 "full exercise of all its powers; we  
 "cannot impede its progress, nor  
 "ought we to desire to do so;  
 "journeying, as it manifestly is, to-  
 "wards the consummation of our  
 "wishes.

"But to proceed in the office I have  
 "undertaken. It is not for me to  
 "consume your time with my reflec-  
 "tions, or, rather, with a repetition  
 "of your own.

"The exposure of the plot and spy



" practices, and the defeat which  
 " Government met with in several of  
 " its prosecutions, manifestly humbled  
 " its tone and proceedings, and left  
 " us in a state of comparative bles-  
 " sedness, when that condition which  
 " was prepared for us is considered.  
 " And could we overlook the impi-  
 " sonment of some, and confine our  
 " view to this Island alone, we might,  
 " I imagine, smile at the prospect  
 " now before us. The abundant har-  
 " vest will save us from starvation;  
 " provisions must come down, until  
 " they meet the ability of the consu-  
 " mers, and this will be too low to  
 " enable the tax-payers to support  
 " the system; and thus it will meet  
 " with another crack, or, as you have  
 " properly called it, a *counterbuff*;  
 " and could we calculate any thing  
 " on the effects of public opinion, we  
 " might suppose that another salu-  
 " tary lesson would be drawn from  
 " these circumstances; and that the  
 " most '*loyal*' of us would begin to  
 " doubt the excellence of that system,  
 " under which neither *plenty nor scar-*  
 " *city can make us happy*. But, of  
 " any accession to the cause of *Re-*  
 " *form*, from this source, we must  
 " not hope. We have already, all  
 " those who *dare think*. The rest will  
 " all come over in that very hour,  
 " and not till then, when our great  
 " ally the DEBT, gives the System  
 " its *quietus*; and towards this it is  
 " fast advancing. We are, however,  
 " as I have intimated, becoming  
 " greatly relieved by the abundant  
 " harvest and large importations,  
 " and add to this a considerable im-  
 " provement in trade, arising neces-  
 " sarily from its late extreme depres-

" sion. This is a state of things  
 " which you will not overlook. You  
 " will find subjects enough for your  
 " pen, and will excuse me for sug-  
 " gesting the adviseableness of ab-  
 " staining from unsavory predictions  
 " as to the future. You know JOHN  
 " BULL, how merry he will make  
 " himself at a little spirit of good for-  
 " tune, and how wise it is sometimes  
 " to let him cool a little.

" Another motive, it appears to  
 " me, for a little wariness in your  
 " speculations on our future situation,  
 " arises from the *state of our cur-*  
 " *rency*, and the whole of our Finan-  
 " cial affairs. To the superficial ob-  
 " server, the predictions of PAINE  
 " and YOURSELF, on these points,  
 " have been *completely falsified*. The  
 " contrivances and unparalleled suf-  
 " ferings which have been inflicted on  
 " the nation, to bring about this state  
 " of things *entered not into your spe-*  
 " *culations*, nor, it may be safely  
 " pronounced, into those of any  
 " human being. Could you have  
 " contemplated such measures, you  
 " would have foretold the result. But  
 " the effects of them *on the Govern-*  
 " *ment*, remain to be felt in all their  
 " force. The people have, I trust,  
 " endured the bitterest of their suffer-  
 " ings. It has spread through their  
 " ranks in succession, but is now felt  
 " at the Treasury, where it will pro-  
 " duce effects not to be long disguised.  
 " The falling off in the revenue,  
 " according to your predictions, and  
 " the artifices by which that fact was  
 " attempted to be disguised, you have  
 " properly exposed in your 19th  
 " Number. Since then another Quar-  
 " ter's accounts have been published,

" in which the receipts appear to have  
 " been about the same; but I write  
 " amidst the avocations of business  
 " and have not time to refer to the  
 " statements. But the present Quar-  
 " ter you may expect to be more pro-  
 " ductive, and, however inadequate  
 " to the demands of the Government,  
 " by some it will be regarded, and by  
 " others represented, as the begin-  
 " ning of that '*revulsion*,' which  
 " is to re-instate the country in  
 " its former prosperity. You will  
 " not wonder if considerable hilarity  
 " prevail among the people on account  
 " of the change, and the prospect be-  
 " fore them. *Paper-money* is quite  
 " the favourite, being actually raised  
 " to a par with Gold coin, and re-  
 " quiring no other trouble, in passing  
 " from hand to hand, but bare inspec-  
 " tion, while the gold is commonly  
 " deficient in weight, and is, therefore,  
 " troublesome. I speak of the old  
 " Gold-coin. As to the new, it is a  
 " mere *rusé* of the Government, being  
 " so rare as to have been seen by com-  
 " paratively few of the people. In ad-  
 " dition to this restoration of the  
 " value of Bank Notes, the prices of  
 " stocks have given great confidence  
 " to the System, amongst the people;  
 " and the facility with which loans  
 " can be obtained seems to justify  
 " that confidence; but these facilities  
 " naturally arise from the difficulties  
 " of the system, and were predicted  
 " by PAINE, as among the symptoms  
 " of its approaching dissolution.

" But one other important feature  
 " in the proceedings of the System,  
 " as to its finances, must not be over-  
 " looked, although I have but little  
 " time in which to notice it. No de-

" cisive steps were taken towards a  
 " *reduction of the Interest*, during the  
 " last Session; but a Committee of  
 " Finance made a most ingenious '*Re-*  
 " '*port*,' distantly suggesting, that  
 " under certain circumstances, al-  
 " though then far from their contem-  
 " plation, a *reduction of the Interest*  
 " might become adviseable. Another  
 " step in this way must and will be  
 " taken, during the next Session.  
 " You will, doubtless, have seen the  
 " Report above spoken of. I regard  
 " it as a very important document.  
 " It is constructed with a skill seldom  
 " surpassed.

" We have been amused with a  
 " good-natured scheme of Mr. Owen,  
 " for the relief of the poor. It seems  
 " to have been regarded, by some, at  
 " least, of our great folks, as a sort of  
 " Tub for the Whale; and in this  
 " way only can I account for the im-  
 " posing manner in which he was en-  
 " abled to bring it forward. Another  
 " subject, which has shared a little of  
 " the attention of the people here, is  
 " '*Religious Persecution*,' as they  
 " call it. Some few symptoms of  
 " such an inclination having manifest-  
 " ed itself among the officious under-  
 " lings of the System. But it is to be  
 " hoped that it will proceed no  
 " further.

" I must not close my letter without  
 " an expression of my thanks for the  
 " manner in which you have perform-  
 " ed the painful duty of disclosing the  
 " defection of our lamented friend,  
 " SIR F. BURDETT."

" The *sham plots*, the *hired spies*,  
 " the *dealings in human blood*, have,  
 " as you supposed, been objects of  
 " my attention; but, I never can



too often repeat either my abhorrence of them, or my applause of those persons who have, in any degree, contributed towards the bringing of them to light. But, this System of *Spies* and *Informers* is not of a few months' age. It has an age equal in duration with that of the new character of the system, and which character the system began to assume with the first war against the *People* of France. The "LOYAL ASSOCIATION" at the CROWN and ANCHOR, against "*Republicans*" and *Levellers*," introduced Spies into England. It was then seen by Corruption, that the frank and honest means of law, or even of open military force, would be insufficient for her purposes. She was compelled, even then, to begin her plans of treachery and her purchasings of human blood. These she has continued ever since; and yet, she seemed horror-stricken when some of her own agents, *Vaughan* and others, took the liberty to trade in human blood on *their own account*. She was quite shocked, that these men should have sold the lives of a handful of Irish labourers, when she herself had dealt in the blood of so many hundreds and thousands. She has caused more innocent blood to be shed than all the despots of Barbary and even than all the Popes. Herod himself was not half so cruel. Pharoah was a mild and chicken-hearted task-master compared

with her. Her plots of *assassination*; the clear *proofs* of these plots, remain recorded in the archives of all the States of Europe. Her favourites, for many years past, have been informers, spies, and assassins; yet the hag herself appears to be ready to faint at the atrocity of a wild young man, who, by accident, fired off a pistol, not loaded with ball, at a man, who had seized hold of him! Oh! she is a delicate Dame!

She is now, however, exposed, in spite of all her Bible Societies and Religious Tracts. And, as if her misfortunes were to be added to by the effects of her *past* sins, one of her own agents has now fallen upon her in the person of a FRANCIS RAYNES, who was, in 1811 and 1812, a Captain in the Stirlingshire Militia, who was employed in the carrying on of the Spy-System in those years, who has not received what he deems his due of blood-money, and who, therefore, has made public the history of his services. His pamphlet, which a very kind and worthy friend has sent to me, is too expensive for wide circulation, and, therefore, I will endeavour to give it a lift by means of the "*Two-penny Trash*."

This man was, it appears, selected by Generals Maitland and Acland for the purpose of getting information relating to the views and movements of the "*disaffected*." He begins by relating some most wonderful stories as to

their combinations and their force; says that they met by thousands to *drill by night*; that they had *sentinels* posted to give the alarm in case of the approach of an enemy; that they sometimes were seen drawn up as a *regular battalion*. These and many other manifest lies he tells in order to enhance the value of his services, for which, being, as he says, out of the routine of *military* duty, he expected to be paid for in an *extraordinary manner*. He produces a sort of *proving* commission from General Acland (who ought to be *remembered*) sending him forth by night, provided with Police Officers. He then shows that this general corresponded with him in *characters*. In one of the general's letters a hint is given that some man may be put aside, in appearance, by a *pretended quarrel* with him. Thus was the profession of arms disgraced by that of the spy!

But I will not fatigue you, or the public, with a particular notice of every contrivance of these people. However, there is one part of the pamphlet that I must transcribe here entire; for it shews clearly, that the spy-system was approved of by the *generals*, who went the length of *advising* the taking of *oaths* in order to enable the takers to betray their associates. You will read the account with feelings of horror; and, I beg you to bear in mind, that this is the system of a Bible

Society and Religious Tract Government. The passage is as follows; and, remember, that the writer is an *officer in the army*, and a man who talks of his *honour*.

"I there made a report to the General, of *some attempts* on the part of the *Luddites*, to *tamper* with the soldiers. I had stationed two of them at Ashton-under-Line, for the purpose of instructing dragoons where to find me: these were *acute fellows*, and *soon understood* the *duty we were upon*. In a little time, *they made an acquaintance* with some persons in the neighbourhood, who shortly proved themselves deeply engaged in the disaffected cause. Upon the soldiers informing me of the conversations they had held with these men, I ordered them to keep up the intimacy they had formed, and, by appearing to approve their sentiments, to induce them to become communicative. By degrees, my men *worked themselves* into their confidence; and, at the time I now speak of, these Luddites had got the length of offering to *twist-in\** the two soldiers, who were, on their part, to furnish them with what ammunition they could, give up their arms and desert; for which purpose, they were to be furnished with a disguise by their new friends.

"On reading the minutes I had made, of information obtained in this manner, which *corroborating circumstances* proved to be correct; and after I had made a report of

\* "This was the cant term for the illegal oath, and not inappropriate in that cotton-spinning country."



“ what I was doing in other quar-  
 “ ters, Gen. Maitland was pleased to  
 “ express *his entire approbation*, and  
 “ desired me to proceed in the methods  
 “ I had adopted. The General or-  
 “ dered me to send the two soldiers,  
 “ JAMES ROBINSON and RODERICK  
 “ MONRO, over to Buxton, as he wish-  
 “ ed to see them himself; and, at the  
 “ same time, told me to give them two  
 “ guineas each, as a *reward* for their  
 “ good conduct.

“ Although I returned from Buxton  
 “ to my party, the same evening, and  
 “ had not mentioned to any one  
 “ where I was going, the next day it  
 “ was perfectly well known where I  
 “ had been! I mention this, to shew  
 “ the vigilance with which the Lud-  
 “ dites observed our movements.

“ Manchester, 20th July, 1812.

“ SIR,—I am directed by Lieut.-  
 “ General Maitland, to acknowledge  
 “ the receipt of your letter of this  
 “ date, and to desire, as the special  
 “ constables are so *well known*, that  
 “ you will send them in to Mr.  
 “ Nadin, and two others shall be sent  
 “ out to you, as soon as proper per-  
 “ sons can be selected.

“ The General wishes that Monro  
 “ and Robinson should continue to  
 “ get as deep as they can, into the de-  
 “ signs of the *Luddites*, and acquire  
 “ their confidence; but, above all,  
 “ GET TWISTED as soon as they  
 “ can: but that they should remain  
 “ with you, and not go away till you  
 “ hear further from him.

“ Go on, and get as *particular* and  
 “ accurate information as possible,  
 “ about the *DERÔT OF ARMS*, and re-

“ port as often as you have any thing  
 “ to communicate.

“ I remain,

“ Your faithful and obedient humble

“ Servant,

“ WROTH P. ACLAND, M.-Gen.

“ Our proceedings, as far as *con-*  
 “ *fidential soldiers* were concerned,  
 “ received a SEVERE CHECK, and were  
 “ very near being put a stop to, by  
 “ the *evil disposition* of some men of  
 “ the Norfolk militia, who gave out  
 “ to the *disaffected*, that the party  
 “ of the Stirlingshire were *spies* and  
 “ *informers*, and recommended them  
 “ to beware of us, as the men were  
 “ allowed to go about the country,  
 “ to collect information. This was  
 “ coming so near the fact, as I had,  
 “ at the time, several steady fellows  
 “ out on that very errand, that I  
 “ found I must counteract the report,  
 “ or give up a very fruitful source of  
 “ intelligence: accordingly, on the  
 “ return of the men, I ordered them  
 “ (*with their own consent*,) to be con-  
 “ fined, for the alleged crime of ab-  
 “ sending themselves from their party,  
 “ without leave; marched them *hand-*  
 “ *cuffed* through some of the villages,  
 “ (where this report had been most  
 “ industriously circulated,) and  
 “ lodged them in the guard house of  
 “ the Norfolk, at Mottram, where I  
 “ kept them confined some days. This  
 “ stratagem had the desired effect,  
 “ confidence was again restored, and  
 “ we went on as usual.”

Is it possible to form an idea of  
 any thing more base than this?  
 Here we see Generals in the  
 army, not only carrying on the  
 work of spies, but consulting with

private soldiers on the best mode of effecting their object. Nay, we find them going the length of almost ordering, or, at least, strongly advising, those soldiers to take an *oath* of fidelity for the express purpose of *breaking the oath* and betraying those who had confided in them. Indeed, the infamy is so flagrant throughout the whole of the transactions, that no comment is necessary. We must not, however, overlook, or fail to applaud, the honest indignation of the soldiers of the *Norfolk Militia*, whom this \*\*\*\*\* calls *evil disposed*.

He afterwards says: "The obtaining of this necessary information, could only be accomplished by *bribing over* sworn-in Luddites, or by *inducing some loyal man* to take the *oath* for the *express purpose* of *breaking it*; a *difficulty* this, *almost insuperable*; as an honest and conscientious man must *shrink from so wicked and blasphemous a bond*; and *one of opposite principles was not for our purpose*. However, with the *assistance of a person who well knew most of the people in that neighbourhood, one was found willing to engage in the service*."

The casuistry here is curious. It was difficult to get the information, because it was to be obtained but in one of two ways: either by *bribery*, or by inducing some *loyal man* to take an *oath* for the *express purpose* of *breaking it*. The

difficulty was great, *because an honest and conscientious man must shrink from so wicked and blasphemous a bond*; and *because one of opposite principles was not for the purpose* of Maitland and Co. By *opposite principles*, this blabbing fool, who seems to glory in his shame, means, I suppose, *dishonest and unconscientious*; and, then, it follows, of course, that the brave generals, Maitland and Acland, looked upon *Robinson and Monro* as a couple of very honest and conscientious fellows; for, they were ready to take the *oath*. And yet, here, in the very same breath, we are told, that an *honest and conscientious man must shrink from so wicked and blasphemous a bond*; and, from this, it follows, that *Robinson and Monro* were a couple of roguish and hardened villains. But, at any rate, here we have the confession, that this was a wicked and *blasphemous bond*, and yet, we find two generals giving men money, as a *reward* for getting *twisted into this very bond*! And, we afterwards find the pious Doctor, the conscientious Doctor, the pure-hearted Doctor, *applauding this work of blasphemy*! And we find that sainted piece of mortality, vulgarly called William Wilberforce, expressing its readiness to place the personal safety of all the people in the absolute power of the said Doctor, because the said Doctor's conduct has inspired so much *confidence* in the said sainted piece of mortality.



Captain (pray give him his title!) CAPTAIN RAYNES; this gallant soldier talks as freely of his "*spies*," of the "*cheat*" of passing Police Officers for Officer's servants; of getting men "*convicted*;" of the "*too-lenient*" conduct of some of the Magistrates; of taking the people "*by surprise*;" and, in short, the man talks like a thief-taker by trade, of which trade he has all the slang and all the hardness of heart. It must be confessed, however, that he relates none of his acts, which do not appear to have been approved of by his *commanders*, both in the field and the *cabinet*. ACLAND (who ought to be remembered!) several times, in writing to this RAYNES, bids him "*keep up the alarm*," "*keep the thing going*," and the like. Amongst the names of the MAGISTRATES, who co-operated with this hirer of oath-takers, appears that of COLONEL FLETCHER of BOLTON, whom the Lancashire people call *Spy-Fletcher*, who has long been the chief agent of Corruption in her Spy-works in the North, and who is said to have brought more men to the gallows than VAUGHAN, or any other of the profession. It is curious enough, that the letter, in which this man's name is found, has a *blank* instead of the name of the *place of date*, and also a *blank* instead of a *signature*. I dare say, that *Fletcher* could have hanged this narrator, and that, therefore, some sort of secrecy was to be observed with regard to him. Above all men living this Fletcher ought to be remembered. Until there exist the means of making this man answer legally for his deeds, England cannot be a place fit for an honest and innocent man to live in.

I have here attempted a mere sketch of the contents of this pamphlet. It abounds in things worthy of remark; and, whoever shall undertake "*the People's Memorial Book*," proposed by me some time ago, will find many names in this book worthy of being put upon everlasting record.

While the gallant RAYNES was so zealously active in the work of seeking for the people's blood, he appears not to have been less so in seeking for their money; for, at a very early period, we find him sending a *memorial*, through General Acland, to the Duke of York. The mercenary fellow was in the *Militia*, and what he wanted was, to retire from the service with *Major's pay*. He wished to *retire*, because, to their honour, the officers of the *Stirlingshire Militia* would *not associate* with him after his spy-adventures. This he acknowledges. For the same reason, or, for fear of giving umbrage to the officers of the army in general, but, I would rather hope, from *honourable feeling*, the Duke of York rejected the prayer of his Memorial. It appears, however, from the letters now published, that the *Duke of Montrose*, the Colonel of the regiment, *highly approved* of his spy-work. This approbation is expressed in many letters; and, indeed, it is very clear, that the Duke *first urged him on* to his extraordinary exertions. Lord SIMMOUTH seems to have been charmed with him. Lord LAUDERDALE also strongly recommended him as a person having *fair claims* to a parcel of the public money. ARBUTHNOT, one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, acknowledges his claims to be just. But, the gallant blade wanted a *sine*.

cure place, when he found he was shut out of the army; and, as he was out of date, and had been supplanted by abler hands, he could obtain nothing but a few hundred pounds in ready money. He worried the fellows to some tune; and, at last, he began to threaten. This appears to have nettled them; but still they were afraid to break with him out-right; and the Duke of Montrose, though he can hardly disguise his haughtiness, desires the slave not to publish his letters to him on the subject. "At length," to use RAYNES'S OWN words, "wearied out with anxiety and suspense, I resolved," says he, "on that step, which I only lament I did not resort to, before I degraded myself by painful disclosures and useless supplications." And, at the close of his pamphlet he says, that, having failed in these supplications, "justice to myself, and the hope of benefitting my family, demand that I should make known the foundation on which my expectations rested."

Thus this man hopes to benefit his family by making it known to the world, that he was himself a spy; that he bribed men to take oaths for the express purpose of breaking them; and that he largely contributed towards bringing great numbers of distressed and starving people to the gallows! This is no madman. To what a pitch, then, must familiarity with this system have arrived, when he could entertain any such hopes! He proclaims his own infamy, and, by so doing, he hopes to benefit his family!

As to the effects, which have been produced by the exposure of the Spy System, you will have perceived from the reading of my

Letter to Major Cartwright, which was written on the first of August, I had pretty fully anticipated those effects. The truth is, that, as I there observed, the bold atrocity of the Government; its manifest intention to introduce a perfect Bourbon System into England, did, at last, astound, stun into thought, even the most thoughtless amongst the people. Those who, at first, saw in the despotic Bills, nothing but bridles in the mouths of the active Reformers, now began to perceive, that, under the pretext of making those bridles for us, chains were preparing for the whole nation. These persons, too, I mean persons who took no active part in politics, could not refrain from reflecting, as soon as they had had time for reflection, that this was a most shocking change; that this new state of things put England upon the footing of France; that there could be no more boasting about English freedom; that the pride of the country lay humbled in the dust; and that there was no probable termination of this state of things. Under such circumstances, the most thoughtless began to think; the most obdurate began to feel. Even those who had joined, during the days of asperity, in calling for these tyrannical measures; even these persons could not help perceiving that, in their eagerness to indulge their rancour against the friends of freedom, they had enabled the government to treat even them as slaves; and that, having now made the government their absolute masters, it no longer stood in need of their support, and that they could no longer expect to be objects of its favour; but that they were now compelled to obey all its



mandates, or submit to be treated with that very same rigour which they themselves had recommended to be employed towards the friends of freedom.

In such a state of the public mind, it was quite natural, that the government should lose the co-operation of Juries in the perpetration of its despotic deeds. The men who compose Juries are a part of the people; and if once the whole people perceived that they were involved in one common state of slavery, it was impossible for twelve men not to enter the Jury-box with that impression on their minds, and with feelings in their hearts hostile to the despotism. Finding themselves accidentally in possession of power, and of very important power too, was it wonderful that they exerted that power, as far as their conscience would permit them, in rescuing from the fangs of the Despotism, men, whom they could not help regarding as fellow-sufferers with themselves? Hence the acquittal of the prisoners, accused of State crimes; and hence also the acquittal of Mr. WOOLER. Long before the receipt of your letter, I had unequivocally expressed my admiration of Mr. WOOLER's conduct upon that occasion; but I could not then, and I cannot now, speak of his conduct with regard to myself, without calling it unmanly and base; and, the occasion will yet arrive for the punishment of that offence in a manner suitable to the malignity of its nature. I have sent to England, to be published there, the indubitable proof, under his own hand, that, while he was reproaching me in the foulest of terms, for what he was pleased to call a *desertion* of the cause by coming to

America, he himself had not only resolved to make a similar retreat; but that he had actually sent forward his attack upon me, and caused it to be promulgated here with the view, foolish as that view was, of *bespeaking a friendly reception for himself*; than which, not even the conduct of the employers of CASTLES, and REYNOLDS, and OLIVER was more detestably base; but, as if to over-top any thing that we have ever yet imagined, as capable of proceeding from the baseness of human nature, Mr. WOOLER's ground of action upon this occasion arose from *personal revenge*, and revenge, too, growing out of mercenary motives. To make good this charge, which is the heaviest that I ever preferred against man, I have only to state to you, that I have it in my power completely to prove, from evidence recently received, that his unmannerly, his ferocious, his cowardly attack upon me, when he knew that there was nobody to face him but women and children, arose from his having been *turned off* as printer of the Register in London, on account of *his dilatoriness, his inaccuracies and his slovenliness, arising from his drunkenness and dissolute life*. At the time here alluded to, the conducting of the Register was not in my own hands. *I did not know who was the printer at the time*; but, after having written several letters, complaining in strong terms of the disgrace which my name suffered from the manner in which the printing was executed, I wrote peremptorily, that, *unless the printer was turned off*, I would take the Register out of the hands of its conductor. This, Sir, was the real ground of Mr. WOOLER's base assault upon me, and which as-

sault, let what will happen, he must express his sorrow for, or he will finally be punished. Nevertheless, I agree with you, that his able and manly defence of himself, had not only a very great effect in humbling the despotism; but that great praise is due to him for his conduct upon that occasion. But again I say, that, against *me*, he has committed an offence, for which he shall answer, in some way or other, if I, or my sons, live to return to England.

It is not for me, against whom, and against whose writings, it is notorious, that all the despotic laws were levelled; it is not for me, who was able truly to say to the Boroughmongers, *I will make you give to us Reformers what we pray for, or I will compel you to deprive the whole people of the shadow of freedom*; it is not for me, who stand known throughout America and throughout the King's dominions, as having been the man, who reduced the Borough Faction thus to expose and to degrade itself; it is not for me to put forward pretensions to any minor sort of merit or of power. But, when we are speaking of the great effects upon the minds of Jurors, is it not quite natural to suppose that *my exile* had some influence in producing those effects? Must not every man in the kingdom have clearly seen in my embarkation for a foreign country the clear proof, that, if Juries did not now make a stand, the marks of slavery would be imprinted on the nation for ever. That step of mine was not more prudent as to myself, than it was patriotic towards my country. It not only secured to me the certainty of being able to continue the exertion of my talents for my

country's good; it not only, as experience has proved, was greatly useful in this respect; but, it must necessarily have produced a great shock in the public mind; it must necessarily have tended to excite alarm, and to rouse all that description of feelings, which, when brought into active operation, in the Jury-box, would naturally afford protection to every man who had been singled out as a victim by the despotism. All the circumstances of my exile were calculated to produce this effect; and, though I do not, and though I need not, wish for any praise on this score, it would be improper to keep silence upon the subject on the present occasion.

I am very happy to find, that you have had an *abundant harvest* in Old England. I was assured of this before, indeed, from the reading of Mr. HUNT's speech, at the dinner to celebrate the acquittal of Mr. WATSON and his associates. For, there is no man in England a better judge, as to such matters, than Mr. Hunt. I always lamented the high price of provisions, that is to say, if the high price arose from a bad crop; because, in such case, the labourers of all descriptions must suffer. In the autumn of 1816, I observed in the Register, that there were all the appearances of a bad crop, and I lamented the circumstance, not only because it would produce great discontent not arising from good political feeling; but because it would afford the Minister and the Boroughmongers an excuse for throwing the calamities of the country upon "*the dispensations of Providence*," with regard to which, of course, they (innocent creatures!) could not possibly have any controul. Thus it turned

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out; for, while they were plotting for the gagging Bills, they most falsely and most basely imputed to us, the having *taken advantage* of the distresses of the country; though it was notorious, that we had been calling for Reform for many many years, under all seasons and all circumstances.

As to the effects, in a political economical point of view, of this abundant harvest, they will be these: the abundant harvest will, by no means, add to the wealth of the land-owner or the farmer. It will tend to keep down and further to depreciate, the value of land. Leases are regulated by prices of corn and other produce; and the purchase money of farms is estimated upon the amount of rent. The farmer is not at all benefitted by growing a hundred quarters this year, where he grew fifty quarters last year, if the hundred quarters now sell for no more than the fifty quarters sold then. Though the low price be no injury at all to the farmer upon an *average of years*, the change from high to low must always be injurious to him; because, he cannot, all of a sudden, reduce wages to the standard of the new prices of corn. So that, the effects of the plentiful harvest will be that the labourer will get a larger share of the produce of the earth for his labour than he got before: the farmer will have less means to pay his taxes; and the government will find it more difficult to collect the nourishment necessary to the sustenance of the Bourbon System; at all which effects I most sincerely rejoice.

I am by no means surprized that trade should have received improvement. In the present state of England, there must be an

incessant *fluctuation*. Nothing can remain steady for any considerable length of time. The distresses of traders, which induced them to glut all the markets abroad as well as at home, produced the ruin of a certain portion of them. *These* are no longer distressed traders. They are paupers. They are gone. Those who have been able to resist the past blows, feel, of course, some relief from the disgorging of the markets, which had been crammed at the expence of their less opulent brethren. But, as far as relates to *predictions*, I never predicted that the nation would remain, with regard to trade, in the situation in which it was last winter. I only said, what I still say, that, without a very great change in the mode of governing the country, even trade and commerce can never return to a state of prosperity.

As to the *state of the currency of the country*, it is impossible for the thing finally to be otherwise than I have repeatedly predicted. I defy all the contrivances, and all the sufferings which the despotism can inflict upon the nation; I defy the bayonets, stationed at the very doors of the farmers and traders, to enable the government to pay the interest of the debt in full in a currency of gold, or in a paper which is *at par* with gold. Shallow, indeed, must be those observers, who regard the predictions of PAINE as having been falsified. What were the predictions of Mr. PAINE? They were these: *first*, that, whenever the people should rush to the Bank and demand gold in exchange for the notes which they held, the Bank would refuse payment, and thus prove itself insolvent; *second*, that, at the end

of about *twenty years*, the National Debt would amount to about a thousand millions, and that then the System would experience *most terrible shocks*; *third*, that the Borough-mongering System would last as long as the Funding System, and not one moment longer.

These, Sir, as far as related to the Money-System of England, were the predictions of that able writer and profound politician, whose memory is calumniated by all the corrupt in England and by all the foolish and the ungrateful in America, and which will always be held in honour by the discerning and the just part of mankind. Mr. PAINE wrote his Treatise on the English System of Finance in the year 1796, and in the year 1797 the first prediction was amply fulfilled; for the people rushed to the Bank with the notes which they held, the Bank refused payment of its notes, and thus it proved itself an insolvent debtor, and it was protected from pursuit as such by acts of the government so manifestly illegal, that those who were guilty of those acts were compelled to resort to what Sir Francis Burdett once called the *baleful tree*, in order to obtain a *Bill of Indemnity*.

As to the second prediction, it is now just *twenty years* since Mr. PAINE wrote his Treatise; and, if any one can say, that the Government Debt does not amount to a thousand Millions; or if any one can say that the System has not experienced *great shocks*, that person indeed may say that this prediction of Mr. Paine has been falsified.

As to the third prediction, namely, that the Borough-mongering System will last as long as the

*Funding System*, and not one moment longer, the time is not yet come either for the falsification or for the verification; but, I believe, that there is not a man in England in his sober senses who does not believe that the two Systems will stand and fall together. Thus, then, as far as events have gone, the predictions of Mr. PAINE have been fulfilled with a precision which do the greatest possible honour to his judgment and his fore-sight; and, the fulfilment of these gives us the best possible right to confide in the correctness of the third.

As to my predictions, what have they been? *First*, that the paper-money would continue to depreciate until it was wholly destroyed by its own depreciation; or, that the quantity of paper would be lessened, and the value of paper thereby raised, and that by this operation, a general ruin would spread itself amongst all persons in trade, and that the country would be unable to pay the taxes at their then nominal amount. This you will find most distinctly stated in the twenty-fifth Letter of Paper against Gold, and in page 336 of the "Two-penny Trash" edition, published in 1816, and sold by Mr. CLEMENT at No. 192 in the Strand.

A second prediction was that the interest of the Government Debt would be reduced in a few years; or, that the whole system would go to pieces amidst a general uproar and breaking up of the Government.

I have frequently foretold the ruin of land-owners and farmers, and an immense increase of the paupers, as symptoms of the approaching dissolution of the system. But, never have I said that



the paper *could not be reduced in quantity and raised in value.* I have said the contrary, and in express words. I well knew that the paper could be brought to a par with gold. But then I also well knew, that the nation must be plunged in ruin by the operation, and that the Government Debt could not be paid its interest in full. However, the above are my two predictions. As to the *first* of the two, the alternative has been adopted. The quantity of the paper has been diminished; the value of the paper has been raised. And, Sir, has *not ruin spread itself* amongst all persons in trade? Has not misery desolated the land? And is the country able to afford taxes to pay the interest of the Debt in full? You know well, that ruin has spread itself amongst all persons in trade; you know well that misery has desolated the land, and driven from its shores thousands upon thousands of its most industrious inhabitants; and you know well that the country does not afford taxes to pay the interest of the Debt in full, but that a false appearance of paying is kept up by means which would be a disgrace to the counting-house of a bill-broker, and which could be put in practice by no government on earth, except that Government which fought its enemy by the means of *forged assignats.*

As to the second prediction, that a reduction of the Interest of the Debt would take place; or, that the whole system would go to pieces in the midst of uproar and confusion, the time for fulfilment is not yet arrived. But, I perceive by your letter, that the time is nearer at hand even than I myself had anticipated. I have ne-

ver seen the famous REPORT, to which you refer me. The news-paper containing that Report has been amongst those which have not found their way to me. It is as you observe, a most important document; and, I dare say, that it is drawn up with a great deal of art. But this is a case in which no craft will ultimately be of any service to the Despots. I have more than a hundred times, *strongly recommended a reduction of the interest of the Debt.* Eleven years ago, I offered arguments in justification of such a measure. I have always been answered, not by argument, but by the foulest of abuse. The measure must be adopted; and whenever it is adopted, *I will claim it as my own;* that is to say, if the reduction of the Interest of the Debt be accompanied with a proportionate reduction in the amount of all salaries, pensions and pay of every sort, issuing from the Public Exchequer; for thus stand my opinions recorded in the Petition of the People of Hampshire, agreed to and signed upon Portsdown Hill, and which Petition I had the great honour to be appointed to draw up. In the tenth and eleventh paragraphs of that Petition, we distinctly prayed for a reduction of the interest of the Debt and of all salaries, and we stated the reasons upon which our prayer was founded. Therefore, whenever this reduction shall take place, the whole of my Financial predictions will have been accomplished. Corruption trembles at the thought, I know; and well she may, for I shall be very much deceived if the day of that reduction does not see her in mourning. She will on that day lose her best friend. Whether she will, like the remaining spouse

of a married couple, in some parts of the world, throw herself into the funeral pile, I cannot pretend to say: but, if she should not have affection enough to make her pursue this course of conjugal fidelity, we shall see, I am very certain, the example of that emblem of innocence, the turtle dove, imitated by this embodied mass of human wickedness and guilt: we shall see this putrid hag drag along a few months or years of mourning, weeping, and wailing, and at last we shall see her expire amidst the exultations of mankind.

A reduction of the interest of the Debt (that is to say, if the present value of the paper continue) is so necessary to the land-owners; it is so obviously their interest, and they have the power of doing it so completely in their hands, that, at the first blush, we are surprised that they should hesitate about it for a single moment, especially as the arguments in justification of the measure are wholly unanswerable, and as it is well known that they would have all the active part of the people with them. But, when we take time to reflect a little, we find two very substantial reasons for their hesitation. The *first* is, that they well know that all their own enormous sinecures and grants must be given up, and that all their own enormous salaries must be reduced, before they can, without being actually pelted in the streets, propose a reduction of the interest of the Debt. The *second* reason is, that they are well aware that, by reducing the interest of the debt, and diminishing the quantity of taxation, they would lose all the Fundholders and the greater part of the Tax-gatherers, who, from fast friends of the Boroughmongering System,

would become its bitterest enemies. These are the reasons, Sir, which make the Borough-mongers hesitate. Pray send me the Report that you speak of, in which they begin to lisp their intentions. I shall keep my eye upon them; I shall watch them in their tricks as to this important matter; but, in the mean while, I very much wish to be furnished with this Report. Whatever a Committee report, has been previously settled upon by the thing called the Cabinet; and the thing called the Cabinet is nothing more than the mouth-piece of the Boroughmongers; so that our friends of the Funds may prepare themselves for receiving about two per cent. in place of five, unless a whirlwind should blow the whole five into the air; or unless the paper can be again lowered in value, which, in fact, is only another name for the same thing.

I have trespassed so long upon your time, and I am in too serious a mood to make any observations upon the projects of Mr. OWEN, or upon the transactions whimsically called Religious persecution; and shall conclude my letter by observing, that I am much pleased to find, that you approve of the manner in which I have exposed the defection of Sir Francis Burdett, and which defection I lament as sincerely as you do.

With my kindest remembrances to our good friends in Lancashire generally, with the most grateful feelings for the attention and the great kindness shewn towards my wife and smaller children by my worthy friends at Liverpool, and with my particular thanks to you and other excellent friends for communications both printed and in writing, I remain,

Your faithful friend,

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

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